

## Mary Lou Terrien

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**From:** Maggie Ehrlich <maggie@friendologie.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 10:50 AM  
**To:** Mary Lou Terrien  
**Subject:** Written Comments for HB 5232 - Today at 12pm

I am very concerned about the proposed legislation against historic preservation: HB 5232/SB 720.

I want to share a personal story with you. I grew up in Grand Rapids. After college, I moved to San Francisco. I have lived on the West Coast for 19 years. My husband and I still rent here. Why? Because having grown up in Heritage Hill with the architecture and craftsmanship that was preserved, it taught me something about history, quality materials and unmatched architecture, something I maybe didn't appreciate when I was younger. But as an adult I have come to understand that these things are hard to find and afford in California. They are unique and highly sought after and valuable. Historic homes like the ones protected in Michigan cost in the millions of dollars, often tens of millions of dollars. At the same time, many precious buildings that are the very character of San Francisco are dismantled and lost when unprotected. We have looked and looked for the right opportunity to buy in California, over the last ten years, and still haven't found it.

Instead, last year we purchased a condominium in Grand Rapids, specifically Heritage Hill. Why? Because of the revitalized neighborhood, the energy, the walkability, and because of our building's original mid-century architecture, specifically large paned windows. These windows are still intact and are historically protected. You see, we even (gladly) pay higher heating bills because of these original, single paned windows. And there are other maintenance hassles due to these windows. But they *make* the space. These are the types of windows currently being featured in top design magazines and blogs. And they can't be remade or replaced. They no longer exist. We chose to buy in a historic building, in a grand historic neighborhood. Over any other place in the world - we chose to invest *here*.

We bought in Heritage Hill because it is happening, vibrant, pedestrian, has pride of ownership, tree-lined streets and historical significance and beauty. It is this way *because* it is an historically protected neighborhood. It is simple cause and effect, in all the best ways a city can hope for.

We are bringing our investment, our capital, our goodwill, to this region *because* it is protected as an historic region. Had our building not been, we would *not* have invested here. If we had to worry that 10 years from now, as this legislation proposes, it would no longer be protected and that which we love, could be lost and our property values diminished, we would have invested elsewhere. As a result of the purchase of this condominium, I have spend 1/2 of the past year in Grand Rapids, while we still earn income in California. We are bringing our dollars into the community. Additionally, we are attracting people and businesses to Heritage Hill and to Grand Rapids in general, as a result of our purchase. I have registered an LLC with the State of Michigan to open a design business in GR, based on this purchase and the energy around preserving historical spaces and decor. There are positive social and economic ripple effects when we bring out-of-state money, appreciation and marketing to this region. Additionally, we are meeting our neighbors, many from Chicago, San Diego, Berkeley, North Carolina, Germany - all attracted to Heritage Hill. Don't we have to look at the reasons why??

Our purchase would never have happened if the neighborhood and building were unprotected in the way suggested with HB 5232/SB 720.

Please stop proposing/your support of HB 5232/SB 720. Do not destroy a process that has produced economic and social prosperity. Do not break something that is not broken at the behest of developers or individuals who want to destroy history in the name of "progress". If some people want cheap/new - build it somewhere else. You don't have to destroy things *that will never be seen again*. The craftsmanship and materials are economically and practically impossible to replace, once they are gone. There is room for both old and new.

But let those of us who appreciate the beauty and quality of old, take care of it. We are willing to spend our hard earned dollars to do it for the enjoyment of all. Don't take that away from us. These buildings and neighborhoods are protected for a reason, because they need protection.

Sincerely,  
Maggie Ehrlich